

Understanding Your Body

By Dr. Janet Kelly

Cancer in women must be viewed differently than cancer in men. The two leading cancers in women, breast cancer and uterine cancer are obviously diseases which are going to occur primarily in women, (although about 1,000 men per year do develop breast cancer.) However, the third and fourth leading cancers in women, lung cancer and colorectal cancer, can be viewed as the same disease that occur in men. Women who smoke are susceptible to the same cancers that have been associated with male smokers; cancer of the lung, larynx, esophagus, and bladder. Since we discussed lung and colorectal cancer in the last article, today we will concentrate on the most common female cancers.

BREAST CANCER is by far and away takes the lead in the number of new cases per year (115,000) and the number of deaths (37,300). As you can notice, the death rate is only one third of what the new case rate is. This is extremely encouraging since it indicates that breast cancer is a very treatable disease if it is detected early enough.

It is a fact that one out of every 14 women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. How will you know if you are or are going to be that one? The specific cause of breast cancer is not known, and it is unlikely that any single factor triggers the disease. We have identified risk factors, however, that might make it more likely for some women to develop breast cancer. The first factor is age. The longer a woman lives, the more likely she is to develop breast cancer. Incidence increases rapidly as a woman enters her forties, levels of between the ages of 45 to 55, then continues to rise thereafter at a more gradual rate. A previous history of breast cancer is a second risk factor for the disease. If a woman has had it

once, she stands an increased chance of getting it again. Familiar factors contribute to the development of breast cancer. Women whose mothers or sisters have had it are twice as likely to develop it themselves. Other possible risk factors include:

History of fibrocystic disease of the breast.

Birth of first baby after the age of 30.

Never borne children.

Large body size.

Early menarche and late menopause.

As you can see, women have little or no control over these risk factors (Can we stop growing older?!). The best hope, then, lies with early detection. Early detection of breast lesions has led to both increased survival rates and better quality of life for women with the disease. Self breast exams on a monthly basis is the first step in early detection. If you do not already know this technique, consult your doctor who can teach it to you. Regular, yearly breast exams by your doctor is the second step. But regular exams alone can detect only one out of every four cancers. Specialized x-rays of the breasts, called mammograms, are now recommended for every woman age 35 or over. The American Cancer Society recommends that a baseline mammogram be done at age 35. Depending on the results and the woman's individual risk factor, follow-up mammograms can be done on the advice of the doctor.

Cancer of the UTERUS and CERVIX is second in new cases per year (55,000) but third in cancer deaths (29,000) for women. This is an excellent example of how early detection can drastically reduce the mortality rate of cancer. In the 1930's and 1940's, uterine cancer was the leading

cause of cancer death in women. After the introduction and widespread use of the PAP smear as a detection tool for the early stages of cervical cancer, the threat of this cancer is almost nonexistent for women who get yearly check-ups. Although the American Cancer Society now recommends PAP smears every three years for low risk women who have had three consecutive normal PAP smears, check with your doctor to see if you fall in this category. There are many high risk categories for cervical and uterine cancer and you would be better to error on the side of safety by getting annual check-ups.

LUNG CANCER is third in the number of new cases (43,000) but second in the number of deaths (36,000) per year for women. Because of the rapid decline in deaths from uterine cancer over the last few years, the astonishing rise in lung cancer in women will soon make it the number one cancer in women, even surpassing breast cancer. This is very discouraging since it is for the most part a preventable disease. It is no secret that the tobacco industry is aiming most of its advertisements toward women, especially the teenage girls where the most rapid rise in cigarette smoking is seen. Only a concerned public, not medical science, can reverse this trend.

Of course, other types of cancer can strike women. For many of these, there are some simple screening procedures which can detect them early. Knowledge of the warning signs and your own risk factors, along with regular check-ups with the basic screening tests are your best protection against cancer.

If you have any medical topics you would like addressed in this column, send your request to: Dr. Janet Kelly, 570 E. Center St., Heber, Utah, 84032.

THE BUSINESS PAGE

Army Awards High Tech Contract

Provo-based Fiber Technology Corp., a wholly-owned subsidiary of TRE Corp. (NYSE), has been awarded a contract worth more than \$1 million by the U.S. Army Aviation Research and Development Command to develop a survivable external fuel tank for high-tech military helicopters.

The tank will be designed to extend the range and operating time for the UH-60A helicopter commonly known as the Black Hawk. The Air Force will also share in the development program and intends to use the tank on its UH-60A helicopter called the

Night Hawk.

Fibertek will develop, fabricate and test the 230-gallon capacity tank.

Fibertek, founded about five years ago by Utah native Larry Ashton, long a member of the filament winding technology industry, specializes in manufacturing structures of advanced composite materials using filament winding as the primary method.

Its parent company, the \$127 million-a-year TRE Corp., is a primary supplier of strong lightweight structures and materials for the government, aerospace and

commercial markets. TRE Corp. purchased Fibertek last year.

Fibertek's contract manager Wayne K. Johnson said the firm now occupies about 55,000 square feet of office and manufacturing space and has more than 100 employees.

Fibertek is also the subcontractor for fuselage development for Beech Aircraft's upcoming Starship I executive aircraft, an eight-to-ten seat prop jet plane made of graphite and epoxy materials rather than the standard aluminum.

Servicemaster Opens Two More Utah Franchises

Servicemaster Contract Services Inc., a residential and industrial cleaning services firm whose parent company is based in Chicago and turns \$700 million in annual business, is expanding in Utah with two more franchises scheduled for opening within three months in the Salt Lake area.

Claude Clark, the Utah franchise coordinator, said the new franchises will bring the Utah total to 27 ranging from Logan to St. George and doing \$150,000 a month in business. Clark said the

franchises are divided into contract services (janitorial work for businesses) and residential services. The vast majority of the work is in contract services, Clark said.

While most franchises start small, often employing only one or two people, they can grow to the point of employing 40 or 50 workers, Clark said. He said Servicemaster franchises have nearly 400 workers in Utah.

The company's first Utah franchise was started in 1980, and since 1981 Servicemaster has seen tremendous growth, according to

Clark. "We feel we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg," he said. He added that Servicemaster franchises also do flood, fire and other disaster clean-up work.

The Servicemaster parent company is based in Chicago, and is the largest such firm in the country, Clark said. It conducts major cleaning services and does work for LDS, Cottonwood and McKay-Dee hospitals, he said. Servicemaster stock is traded over-the-counter.